



Community Toolkit

Diabetic Retinopathy

Introduction

The National Eye Institute (NEI) sponsors Healthy Vision Month each May to encourage communities throughout the country to make vision a health priority. Each year's observance emphasizes one of the 10 Healthy People 2010 vision objectives. The 2004 focus is on reducing visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.

This toolkit is for community leaders like you to use in developing local activities and building partnerships. By using these checklists, suggestions, and sample documents, you can implement a community-based activity, large or small, to educate people with diabetes about the importance of taking care of their eyes.

The toolkit consists of seven sections:

- **Section 1: Activity Planning Checklist**—a month-by-month timetable and guidelines to planning a Healthy Vision Month activity in your community.
- **Section 2: Sample Activities**—examples of small- and large-scale activities that can be implemented in your community.
- **Section 3: Sample Announcement**—an announcement that can be used to inform people and organizations about your activity.
- **Section 4: Sample Invitation**—an invitation to a community or special activity.
- **Section 5: Sample Proclamation**—a proclamation that can be submitted to your Governor or mayor for support and his or her signature.
- **Section 6: Sample News Release**—information that can be sent to local newspapers and television and radio stations for activity coverage.
- **Section 7: Measure Your Success**—suggestions and important steps to monitoring your activity's success.

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Activity Planning Checklist

Community activities are useful for spreading the message about the importance for people with diabetes to get an annual dilated eye exam.

Every effort, large or small, is essential in helping reduce vision loss from diabetic retinopathy. The program you develop can be as simple or involved as you decide, from putting up posters to organizing large-scale activities that help people with diabetes and those who care for them learn about the importance of getting an annual dilated eye exam.

Once you have decided what kind of activity to have, it is time to start planning. The following checklist contains sample items that might help to guide you through the activity planning process.

Four Months Before

- ☐ Assess the need in your community by determining how many people in your community are at risk for diabetes and diabetic retinopathy. You can contact your local health department, social service agency, or another planning agency to find out this information.
- ☐ Decide what type of activity you want to conduct. Get some ideas from the Sample Activities section [see page 6].
- ☐ Create a list of materials and resources you will need to organize this activity so that you can be specific about how collaborating organizations and individuals can help as well as benefit.
- ☐ Recruit partners and secure commitments from the leadership of participating organizations. Ask about other businesses that may participate.
- ☐ Establish a planning committee.
- ☐ Hold an initial organizing meeting.
- ☐ Appoint someone to coordinate all of the elements of the activity or to coordinate outreach for the program.
- ☐ Establish a date for your activity based upon the availability of the existing resources. Have two or three dates in mind so you can adjust to the availability of venues and other services.
- ☐ Establish a budget. If you require funds, ask for donations from area businesses and retailers.



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- ☐ Pair the tasks for organizing your activity with organizations you invite to serve on your committee. Ask for other contributions.
- ☐ If your activity is outdoors, be sure to arrange for an indoor alternative in case of bad weather. Rain dates usually run into scheduling conflicts, and participants lose their enthusiasm.
- ☐ Check deadlines with local daily, weekly, and monthly published media; ask what their policy is about public service announcements (PSAs). Create a calendar to track when media materials are due.
- ☐ Ask the local cable television provider to produce and air a PSA.
- ☐ Request a proclamation from your local government for the day, week, or month. Follow up one week later to make sure your request is being processed. See Sample Proclamation [on page 9].
- ☐ List your event online at www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm/.

Three Months Before

- ☐ Identify and order the materials you may need for your activity. Check the list of the NEI educational materials available for people at risk for diabetic retinopathy at www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm/.
- ☐ Develop a media kit and include a promotional product, such as the Healthy Vision refrigerator magnet, to deliver to local television media the day before the event.

Two Months Before

- ☐ Create an event flyer or poster and distribute them.
- ☐ Send out a promotional mailing to potential participants (organizations and individuals).
- ☐ Schedule a committee meeting to be held at the event venue. Discuss the timeline for how the day will run, where each activity will be set up, traffic patterns for guests, and media parking.
- ☐ Balance your budget. Follow up with contributors who will be donating goods and services on the day of the activity. Follow up with financial donors who have not sent in their checks.
- ☐ Be sure you have established a firm contact with the schedulers for guests. Exchange emergency contact numbers where they and you can be reached in the event of a schedule change.

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One Month Before

- ☐ Send out announcements to community calendars.
- ☐ Check all of your lists. Be sure you have guaranteed appearances from presenters (plan alternates in the event of last minute cancellations).
- ☐ Follow up with all media contacts to be sure your activity is scheduled to run at the appropriate time and that the media have all the information necessary to promote your event. Ask if they have scheduled guest interviews or if they would like to have one on the day of the activity.

Two Weeks Before

- ☐ Firm up the program.
- ☐ Make sure that your promotional materials are set to run in the media.
- ☐ Get final confirmation from guests.
- ☐ Have programs printed. Plans often change as the date gets closer, so avoid printing too far in advance.
- ☐ Check your schedule for delivery of materials. Make sure you know whether setup is included with delivery and have the necessary equipment available, such as a hand truck and box cutter.

Day Before

- ☐ Deliver a media kit with a promotional product to local television media and encourage them to show it on air and announce your event.
- ☐ Contact the media that you are expecting to attend your event. Make sure they have a complete schedule, with speakers' list, celebrities, and activities, and that they know when the best film opportunities are scheduled.



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Day of the Event

- ☐ Keep communication lines available for emergencies.
- ☐ Follow your plan.
- ☐ Monitor and coordinate.
- ☐ Conduct informal interviews with people who attend your event to determine whether your message is meaningful and if they will get annual dilated eye exams and monitor their health because of your event.
- ☐ Have fun promoting healthy vision!

After the Event

Follow up.

- ☐ Send thank-you notes.
- ☐ Follow up with the media.
- ☐ Show your appreciation to sponsors and volunteers with an awards ceremony.
- ☐ Promote your success with a news release.

Apply lessons learned.

Look at what you have accomplished, make adjustments, and continue the important work you have started toward making vision a health priority in your community. Assess each aspect of your program and determine how your project could be improved. Answer these questions:

- ☐ Could we modify procedures, shift resources, or look for more effective ways to distribute materials?
- ☐ Could we involve new organizations to fill unanticipated gaps?
- ☐ Were we too ambitious in our plan, or do we need to rethink our timeline in the future?
- ☐ Can we identify places where we can try other approaches and keep our program fresh?
- ☐ Has our activity resulted in increasing the number of people with diabetes who have dilated eye exams at least once a year?

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Sample Activities

This section provides you with a list of ideas for activities that your organization may host during Healthy Vision Month. Some of the activities in this section may be more appropriate than others, depending on your available resources, the needs of your community, and the profile of your target audience.

Here are some ideas you can use to promote healthy vision in your community:

- ◆ Host the reading of a proclamation [see page 9] by the mayor or Governor, a flag-raising ceremony, or another media activity to make people in your community aware of the risk of visual impairment from diabetic retinopathy.
- ◆ Contact the local chamber of commerce to see what local observances are celebrated during May, Healthy Vision Month. Secure a booth at a local fair or festival and provide information about the importance of annual dilated eye exams for people who have diabetes. Order free educational materials.
- ◆ Host eye health night at a game of the local sports team. Feature an eye health presentation during half-time. Give away the Healthy Vision Month refrigerator magnet and other educational materials.
- ◆ Check out the health observances calendar at www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp for other health-related activities in May. Consider tying in with Older Americans Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, or National Women's Check-up Day.
- ◆ Ask your human resources director about annual dilated eye exam benefits for employees with diabetes and whether you can include information in pay envelopes or the company newsletter.
- ◆ Arrange for a local eye care professional to speak at your employee benefits orientation.
- ◆ Develop in-service training seminars for medical, health, and social service agencies. Encourage them to include information about diabetic retinopathy in continuing medical education programs.
- ◆ Mother's Day is on May 9. Partner with a local eye care professional to hand out coupons for free or discounted eye exams that can be given as Mother's Day gifts.



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Sample Announcement

This announcement can be used to inform people and organizations in the community about your activity. You can post the message on your Website and print it on flyers that can be posted in libraries, community centers, and other public venues.

[INCLUDE HEALTHY VISION MONTH LOGO HERE. This logo can be downloaded at www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm/.]

If you have diabetes, get an annual dilated eye exam.

Diabetic retinopathy can cause severe vision loss. And people with the disease may not even know they have it. That's why medical experts recommend that everyone with diabetes have a dilated eye examination at least once a year. The exam helps eye care professionals detect the disease and offer treatment before vision is lost.

People with diabetes also can keep their health on **TRACK**:

- ◆ **T**ake your medications.
- ◆ **R**each and maintain a healthy weight.
- ◆ **A**dd physical activity to your daily routine.
- ◆ **C**ontrol your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- ◆ **K**ick the smoking habit.

To learn more about diabetic retinopathy, please join [YOUR ORGANIZATION] on [DATE] from [TIME(S)] at [LOCATION]. Contact [NAME and PHONE NUMBER] or visit our Website at [WEBSITE ADDRESS] for more information.

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Sample Invitation

The following text can be used to invite the community to your activity.

If you have diabetes, get an annual dilated eye exam.

Diabetic retinopathy can cause severe vision loss. And people with the disease may not even know they have it. That's why medical experts recommend that everyone with diabetes have a dilated eye examination at least once a year. The exam helps eye care professionals detect the disease and offer treatment before vision is lost.

We invite you to join us in celebrating May as Healthy Vision Month and to learn more about diabetic retinopathy.

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] has organized [DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY] to observe Healthy Vision Month 2004, and [NAMES OF COMMUNITY LEADERS/LOCAL OFFICIALS] will attend. We plan to hold the activity at [YOUR FACILITY'S NAME] on [MONTH/DAY] at [TIME OF ACTIVITY].

The purpose of [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S] Healthy Vision Month 2004 activity is to educate people with diabetes about diabetic retinopathy and the importance of receiving annual dilated eye exams.

For more information, call [CONTACT NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER].



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Sample Proclamation

You can provide your Governor or mayor with this proclamation as a way to encourage him or her to proclaim May 2004 as Healthy Vision Month in your State or city.

Healthy Vision Month, May 2004

WHEREAS: Vision is an essential part of everyday life, affecting how we learn, communicate, work, play, and interact with the world. Yet, approximately 13 million Americans diagnosed with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy, a leading cause of vision loss in working age adults, and

WHEREAS: Every person who has diabetes should have a dilated eye exam at least once a year to reduce the risk of visual impairment from diabetic retinopathy, and

WHEREAS: Vision loss from diabetic retinopathy cannot be restored. With early detection, timely treatment, and appropriate followup care, people with advanced diabetic retinopathy can reduce their risk of blindness by 90 percent, and

WHEREAS: The eye health of people with diabetes can be enhanced by getting dilated eye exams once a year, and

WHEREAS: This [ACTIVITY] exemplifies the practices that people with diabetes must observe to take care of their health and their vision as well as the benefits that healthy vision and staying healthy can bring to their lives,

I, [NAME], [TITLE] of the [CITY or STATE], do hereby proclaim [DAY/WEEK/MONTH] as Healthy Vision [DAY/WEEK/MONTH]. I urge all residents of [CITY or STATE] with diabetes and everyone who cares for them to make vision a health priority by getting a dilated eye exam at least once a year to keep their health on track.

Signature

[MAYOR or GOVERNOR]

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Sample News Release

This news release can be sent to local newspapers and television and radio stations to encourage them to cover your activity and develop a story about the importance of annual dilated eye exams for people who have diabetic retinopathy.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [YOUR SPOKESPERSON]

[ORGANIZATION]

Telephone: [xxx-xxx-xxxx]

E-mail: [E-MAIL ADDRESS]

[WEBSITE]

[ORGANIZATION] Urges Annual Dilated Eye Exams for People With Diabetes

[CITY, STATE], [DATE]—[ORGANIZATION] is sponsoring [PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ACTIVITIES OR OUTREACH EFFORT] on [DATE] to urge all people with diabetes to have a dilated eye exam at least once a year to reduce the risk of visual impairment from diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of vision loss among working age adults. It cannot be cured, but early detection, timely treatment and appropriate follow-up care can reduce the risk of blindness by 90 percent, even for people with advanced diabetic retinopathy.

“People with diabetes need to know that keeping track of their health can help them stay healthy and may also help to reduce the complications from diabetes,” said [SPOKESPERSON]. The National Eye Institute (NEI) and [ORGANIZATION] encourage people with diabetes to get an annual dilated eye exam and keep their health on **TRACK**:

- ◆ **T**ake your medications.
- ◆ **R**each and maintain a healthy weight.
- ◆ **A**dd physical activity to your daily routine.
- ◆ **C**ontrol your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- ◆ **K**ick the smoking habit.

“This [ACTIVITY] exemplifies the practices that people with diabetes must observe to protect their vision as well as the benefits of staying healthy to reduce the risk of vision loss and other complications that can result from diabetes,” said [SPOKESPERSON].



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The [ACTIVITY] will take place on [DATE] from [TIME(S)] at [LOCATION]. For more information, contact [NAME and PHONE NUMBER] or learn more at [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

This activity is part of Healthy Vision Month 2004, sponsored by the NEI. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Measure Your Success

Step back periodically and check how well your program is working and where you can make improvements. Identify small problems and make adjustments before major problems develop. Monitor schedules and budgets. Staff, volunteers, and the rest of the community can see what has been accomplished and give you their feedback.

Some important elements for maintaining momentum and enthusiasm for your program are establishing lines of communication, avoiding competing agendas, incorporating volunteers' ideas, and keeping meetings on track.

Here are some ideas that will help you to measure the success of your activity.

- ◆ **Monitor materials dissemination.** Track the number of materials distributed to your audience. For example, how many diabetic retinopathy brochures have you distributed within the community? If the number seems low, try to make adjustments. Can you leave some for people with diabetes at local health clinics?
- ◆ **Monitor your program timetable.** Check periodically to ensure that deadlines are being met and resources used efficiently. Do you need to make schedules more realistic or to assign more people to a certain task?
- ◆ **Track and analyze media coverage.** Scan newspapers and monitor radio and television to learn how often your program receives coverage. How many articles, editorials, or letters have been published by the newspapers you contacted? If media coverage seems low, call your media contacts to remind them of the importance of your program.
- ◆ **Monitor attendance.** Learn whether you are reaching your audience through tracking measures that may include counting the number of people who stop by your booth at health fairs or malls, counting the number of audience members at presentations, or asking how people learned about the activity.
- ◆ **Obtain feedback.** Ask for feedback from cooperating organizations, volunteers, participants, and others. Find out what worked well, which areas need improvement, how improvements can be made, and what they would be willing to do next. Find out which activities they liked best and what they would suggest for new activities.
- ◆ **Note future changes.** To modify procedures, look for more effective ways to distribute materials or shift resources. Share your successes and lessons learned with those who help you.
- ◆ **Continue efforts.** Publicize and promote your successes with a press release. You could also show your appreciation to sponsors and participants through an awards ceremony. Add other types of activities and repeat those that work best. Tell potential sponsors about your successes, and ask for their help in the next phase of your program.



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Response Card

Please take a few minutes to tell us about your program by filling in the information below.
Return the form to:

National Eye Institute
Building 31, Room 6A32
31 Center Dr. MSC 2510
Bethesda, MD 20892-2510
Fax: (301) 402-1065

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax/E-mail: _____

1. In what type of event or promotional activity did your organization participate?

2. What other organizations did you work with to promote Healthy Vision Month?

3. What type of Healthy Vision Month materials did you use for your event?
(Please include the number you ordered and where you distributed them.)

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4. Were the materials effective in their use? Which ones were not useful?

5. What type of media coverage or response did you get from your activities?

6. How many people participated in your event?

7. What other resources or new ideas did you find that helped promote Healthy Vision Month in your community?
